

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

*This listing will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:*

1. (Currently amended) A f[[F]] fluid bed granulation process of a predetermined substance comprising the steps of:

forming, through a fluidification air flow of a predetermined flow rate, a fluid bed of granules of said the substance to be granulated, fed to it in form of seeds[[,]];

feeding said fluid bed with a continuous flow of a growth substance[[,]];

inducing, in at least part of said fluidification air flow, the formation of a substantially vortex-shaped circulatory movement, ~~substantially vortex-shaped~~, of the said granules of the substance to be granulated in said fluid bed; and ~~through at least part of said fluidification air flow~~,

maintaining and regulating said circulatory movement through said part of the fluidification air flow,

wherein said substantially vortex-shaped circulatory movement has a substantially horizontal axis, and ~~in that said~~

wherein the fluidification air flow is divided into a plurality of fractions having respective flow rates comprised between a minimum value flow rate, sufficient to support the fluid bed, fed at a first zone thereof, and a maximum value flow rate, fed in another zone of the same bed, so as to induce and to maintain said substantially vortex-shaped circulatory movement, ~~substantially vortex-shaped~~, ~~with substantially horizontal axis~~, of the granules of said substance.

2. (Currently amended) The g[[G]] granulation process according to claim 1, wherein the variation in fluidification air flow rates between said first zone where the flow rate is minimum and the zone ~~spaced out from it~~ where the flow rate is maximum[[,]] ~~is of the steps type~~ step-wise.

3. (Currently amended) The g[[G]] granulation process according to claim 1, wherein the variation in fluidification air flow rates between said first zone where the flow rate is minimum and the zone where the flow rate is maximum is substantially gradual and continuous.

4. (Currently amended) The g[[G]]ranulation process according to claim 1, wherein said granules of the substance to be granulated are made to flow with a substantially helical movement from one end of the fluid bed where a flow of seeds of said substance is continuously fed, to an opposite end thereof of the fluid bed where a flow of finished granulated product is continuously discharged ~~with substantially helical movement~~.

5. (Currently amended) The g[[G]]ranulation process according to claim 1, wherein finished granulated product obtained in said fluid bed is continuously discharged from a bottom of said fluid bed by gravity.

6-10. (Cancelled)